Introduction

The *Alameda County Congestion Management Agency Countywide Transportation Plan* is the blueprint for transportation improvement through the year 2026 and contains a shared vision of the county's long-term transportation needs.

A SNAPSHOT OF ALAMEDA COUNTY

Alameda County is the geographic center of the nine-county Bay Area. Extending from the region's urban core to its rural periphery, the county incorporates land uses that range from intensely urban to suburban and rural.

Transportation is vital to Alameda County and its economy. The county is a global gateway for international trade. Its freeways are the principal trucking routes that connect the Bay Area with its economic hinterland. Oakland, the county's largest city, is the hub of the BART system. Fremont, the region's fourth-largest city, is Alameda County's gateway to the Silicon Valley. The Port of Oakland is one of the four busiest ports on the West Coast; it is also a primary gateway for the transcontinental railroad system.

THE COUNTYWIDE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The countywide transportation system is one of multiple transportation choices under the management of multiple agencies. It is a byproduct of the separate and distinct histories of the county's ports, streetcar lines, boulevards, freeways, bus routes and rapid transit system.

It is the charge of the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (CMA) to bring all these elements together in a shared vision.

- As Figures 1.1 and 1.2 indicate, the countywide transportation system is a complex network of transportation facilities and services managed by city, county, regional and state agencies plus a smaller array of special service districts.

Figure I.1 - Metropolitan Transportation System (MTS) Streets and Highway System in Alameda County

Figure 1.1
Metropolitan Transportation System (MTS):
Designated CMP System and Streets and Highway System in Alameda County

Figure I.2 - Metropolitan Transportation System (MTS) Transit Corridors

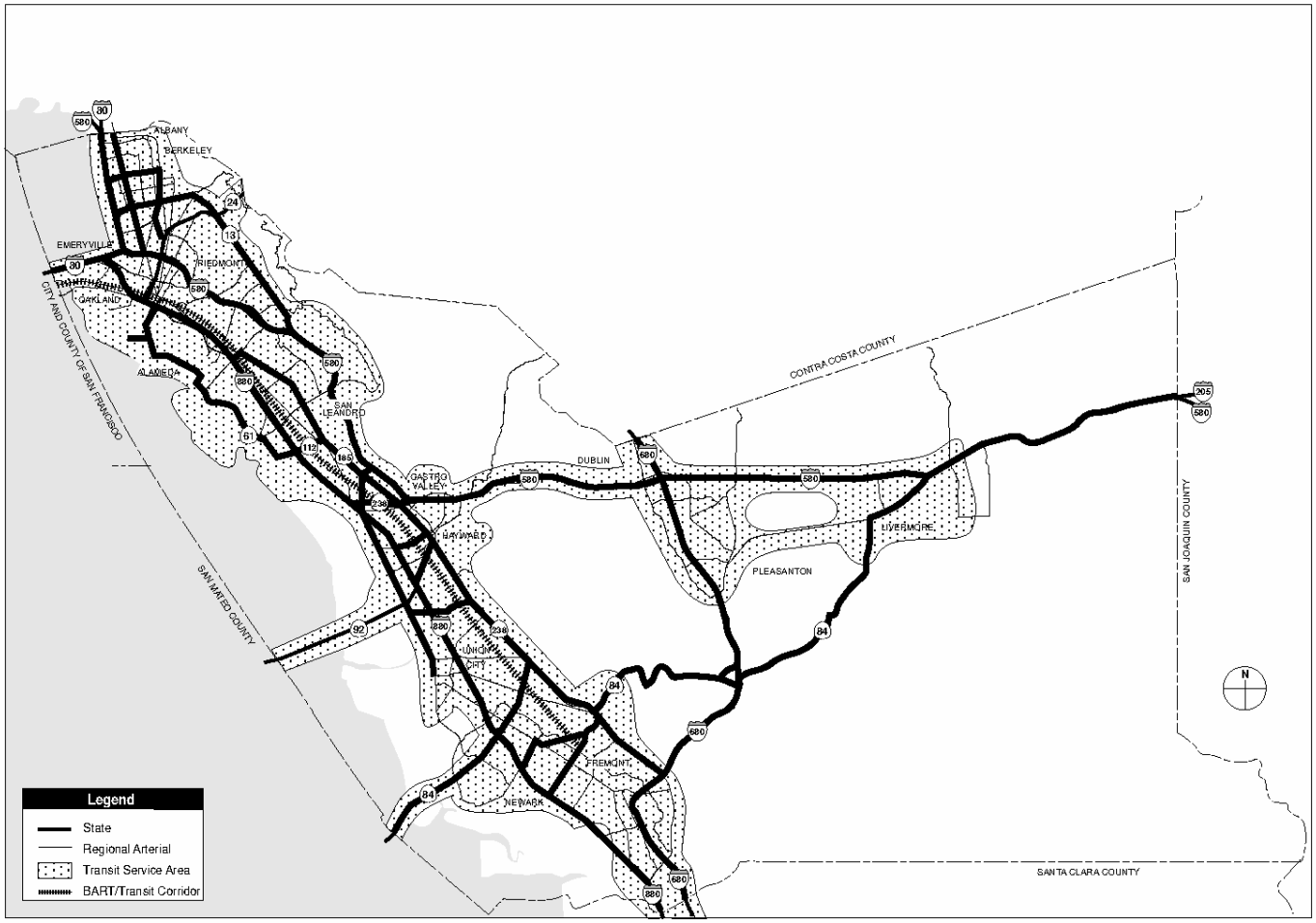

Figure 1.2
Metropolitan Transportation System (MTS): Transit Corridors
Alameda County

- The present system has been in the making for more than 100 years and is a by-product of the separate and distinct histories of the county's railroads, port, streetcar lines, boulevards, freeways and transit systems.
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- It is the responsibility of the CMA to develop a plan that identifies the funding that is needed to maintain, operate and improve the countywide transportation system. The plan is important because countywide consensus on funding needs and investment priorities is essential if we are to develop a truly coordinated system that allows us to manage congestion more effectively.
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CONGESTION IN THE BAY AREA AND ALAMEDA COUNTY

- Congestion is a by-product of the intense concentration of economic and social activity found in metropolitan areas. Congestion is found in every metropolitan area and is not, per se, an indicator of an inefficient transportation system. Congestion may signal the need for additional transportation investment—or simply provide evidence of economic vitality. Additional investment is needed when congestion compromises the transportation system's ability to move people and goods conveniently, economically and reliably. That is now the case in Alameda County.
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- Over the past two decades, street and highway congestion have increased significantly in both Alameda County and the Bay Area at large. Regionwide, delay on the freeway system has increased from 25,000 vehicle hours in 1980 to more than 120,000 vehicle hours in 2000. This dramatic increase in delay was concentrated in two periods of explosive economic growth—1980 to 1987 and 1995 to 2000. In other words, increasing congestion was the downside of the two extraordinary economic booms the Bay Area enjoyed in the eighties and nineties.
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During the eighties boom, increased congestion was primarily attributable to the growth of suburban employment, the increase in the number of women participating in the labor force and the resulting increase in the number of households with two or more cars.

- The growth of suburban employment actually served to improve the geographic

balance of jobs and housing, and the 1990[1] census showed that conveniently brief commutes remained
the norm for most Alameda County commuters—despite increasing congestion on the freeway system.

- Throughout the 1990s, employment growth remained largely in suburban settings, with job growth in Fremont, Dublin, Hayward and Livermore accounting for 73 percent of the countywide total. Truly arduous commutes came with the Bay Area's 1995 boom, which was fueled by the dramatic growth of the semiconductor and telecommunications industries and the so-called "dot-com revolution". The growth of high-tech employment and the wealth effect created by the concentration of high-tech firms in the Bay Area combined to produce explosive employment growth in the Silicon Valley, San Francisco and, eventually, the entire Bay Area.

- The surge of economic growth that began in 1995—and the new workers it lured to the Bay Area—overwhelmed the housing supply in Santa Clara and San Francisco counties, forcing new West Bay and South Bay workers to look to the East Bay and beyond for affordable housing.

- Housing prices were soon rising sharply in Alameda and Contra Costa counties as well—forcing an increasing share of new workers and new households to expand their housing search to include Solano and Yolo counties and Central Valley communities such as Tracy, Manteca, Modesto and Stockton. The result is that pass-through traffic involving commutes longer than 30 miles now accounts for much of the traffic overload that congests I-80, I-580, I-680 and I-880 in Alameda County.

- Commuters using these corridors are the most likely to experience high-stress commutes, unreliable travel times and unavoidable late arrivals at work. Not surprisingly, these are also the same corridors in which the rail service provided by BART, ACE and the Capitols have successfully attracted new riders in large numbers. The same freeways provide essential land side access to the Port of Oakland and account for the Bay Area's heaviest truck travel.

[1] Data from the 1990 U.S. Census is cited because 2000 census data is not yet available.

- Examining the current performance of the countywide system, we must report that:
  - Average speed on arterials and freeways improved in some parts of the county, but deteriorated in others.
  - Average commuter travel times increased by 10 minutes from 1993 to 2000; during the same period the home-to-work distance traveled by the average commuter increased almost two miles. (Census data available in 2003 will allow us to confirm these estimates made by RIDES for Bay Area Commuters.)
  - Overall, level of service for freeways improved between 1998 and 2000. There were higher percentages of roads with LOS A-C and a drop in segments with LOS E or F. Overall level of service for arterials remained somewhat the same as in previous years.
  - Vehicle hours of delay, i.e. congestion, increased 29.7 percent in 2000 in comparison to 1999. Total delay in 2000 as reported by Caltrans was 68,750 vehicle hours as compared to 53,000 in 1999.

MANAGING CONGESTION IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

Quite different options for congestion management are appropriate for different parts of Alameda County. For example, it is virtually impossible to acquire new rights-of-way for freeway construction in Oakland, Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville. On the other hand, lanes can still be added to I-580 and I-680 in East County and to I-880 in South County.

The relatively high densities and limited parking supply of North County invite an investment strategy that emphasizes arterial transit service. On the other hand, the relatively low densities of the Livermore-Amador Valley and South County limit the potential of arterial transit, while the high volumes of pass-through traffic using I-580, I-680 and I-880 to reach the Silicon Valley invite expansion of passenger-rail service sharing freight rights-of-way.

As this brief discussion suggests, the difficulty of right-of-way acquisition and other environmental impacts will limit future highway expansion in some parts of Alameda County, while differences in settlement density, layout and parking supply will limit the effectiveness of

street transit in other parts of the county. This means that a highly diversified strategy of congestion management is necessary to satisfy the diversity of transportation needs found in Alameda County. In turn, this means that:

- The countywide plan must be responsive to local needs;
- Its funding mechanisms must be flexible enough to finance diverse alternatives; and
- Approved projects must be coordinated in ways that produce mutually compatible results.

OUR ROLE

The Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (CMA) was created in 1991 by a joint-powers agreement between Alameda County and all its cities. The CMA's goals, duties and composition make it easier for local governments to tackle the increasingly complex problem of traffic congestion.

The CMA Board includes representatives from Alameda County, its cities, AC Transit and BART. Technical expertise is provided by the staff-level Alameda County Technical Advisory Committee with representatives from each of these organizations, plus Livermore-Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA), Union City Transit, the Alameda County Transportation Authority (ACTA), the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Caltrans, the Port of Oakland and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). The CMA is Alameda County's transportation information and funding conduit. By properly channeling information, expertise and scarce transportation dollars, the CMA makes sure that tax dollars are spent wisely to improve transportation countywide.

The CMA also coordinates with county and regional transportation organizations, such as the MTC. Over the past 10 years, the CMA has built a framework to plan and obtain funding for Alameda County transportation services and projects.

THE PLAN

One of the CMA's primary responsibilities is to develop and periodically update this *Countywide Transportation Plan*. The plan is a long-range policy document that guides transportation

funding and service decisions over the next 25 years, addressing freeways, buses, rail, ferries and other options like telecommuting, bicycling and pedestrian facilities.

Transportation projects competing for state or federal funds must be consistent with this plan, as well as with the long-range plan of MTC, the Bay Area transportation planning agency.

The outcome we seek is a transportation system that enhances the county's position in the global economy; that provides a framework around which to array our future growth; that contributes to the livability of our cities and suburbs; that provides convenient and economical access to jobs and housing; and that conserves energy for the use of future generations. The legacy we would like to leave is a transportation system with a useful life for many generations.

To achieve this outcome, the plan must couple investment, pricing and cooperative land-use planning for transportation and land use in a three-part strategy designed to achieve six primary goals:

- Improve mobility for people and freight;
- Improve transit access and increase transit use;
- Improve air quality;
- Enhance transportation's contribution to the economic vitality of Alameda County;
- Ensure serviceable operation of existing facilities and services; and
- Coordinate transportation investment and community planning more effectively.

Chapter 1 articulates our vision of the county's future transportation needs. Chapter 2 assesses the present state of the countywide transportation system and our ability to finance investment needed for the future. Chapter 3 outlines our strategy for developing a transportation system that is tailored to fit our needs as effectively and efficiently as possible. Chapter 4 sets out those administrative policies necessary to guide investment, management and pricing. Chapter 5 identifies sources of funding—including reliable funding sources for major projects, transit operations and street

maintenance. Chapter 6 presents the investment program and includes all projects that the CMA has judged as worthy of investing in if additional funding can be secured, and Chapter 7 proposes a set of performance measures to be used in monitoring and evaluating the results of the CMA's investment and management programs. Chapter 8 discusses some of the short-term, long-term and ongoing issues involved in the implementation of the plan.